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# *The KNACK of* **MANAGEMENT**

*Second--*  
*Building Up the Force*



A. W. SHAW COMPANY  
CHICAGO NEW YORK  
LONDON

YB 18372







# BUILDING UP THE FORCE

HOW TO GET HELP,  
HANDLE APPLICANTS, AND FIT MEN  
INTO THE ORGANIZATION

HOW A FACTORY WEDED OUT  
A HUNDRED MEN—YET  
SCORED AN OUTPUT  
RECORD

FIFTEEN TESTED WAYS TO  
SECURE LABORERS,  
HELPERS AND SKILLED  
WORKMEN

By H. A. WORMAN



A. W. SHAW COMPANY  
CHICAGO NEW YORK  
LONDON

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# I

## RECRUITING THE WORKING FORCE

**L**ABOR is the chief commodity entering any factory. Outlay for raw material, fuel, supplies, rarely equals the pay roll by month or year. Usually wages amount to twice the cost of materials: in many factories where the finish and accuracy of parts require elaborate processes, the money spent for men trebles the expenditure for the wood and iron which they fashion into finished product.

Is this overwhelming importance of labor recognized in the methods used in bargaining for it? Analysis shows the contrary to be true. The purchasing agent for materials bulks large in every organization of size. In rank and salary he is the peer of the sales manager. It is conceded that the profits of the house depend on his ability to "buy right," to forestall market fluctuation, to secure raw stock of standard quality at the lowest possible price, no less than on the skill of the sales department in disposing of output. To aid him, all the resources of the organization are marshalled; factory methods are modified at his bidding; foremen bow to his decisions. Nor is his vital relation to the

success of the business in any way over-rated.

Purchase of labor, on the other hand, is treated as incidental. Either the selection of workmen is made part of the duty of the superintendent, left to the foremen, or is intrusted to a minor official having none of the authority and not more than a third of the pay of the materials purchasing agent. It is the rule, indeed, in factories employing a thousand men or less to depend on the factory head or department chiefs to find the mechanics and laborers they need. Yet every consideration prompting that machinery and raw stock shall be bought by a specialist, familiar with the market conditions of the hour, applies with equal force to the purchase of labor.

Men are harder to judge than bars of steel, brass ingots or bales of fiber. "According to sample" does not hold in dealing with them. Every laborer, "handy man," machinist, is a sample himself whose fitness can be determined only by patient inquiry which superintendent and foremen haven't time to conduct. They act on the theory that the simplest way is to try the applicant out. It is simple—also costly beyond reason.

To be charged up against the process, there is the time lost by the skilled worker who "breaks in" the new recruit, the materials spoiled, the tools injured during the operation and further education of the novice, the decrease in product from the machine or bench involved. It is true that the average man must be broken in. The point to be remembered is that the process pays only when a permanent workman is thereby developed—and that careful, methodical selection of applicants by a trained mind will save more than its costs. The man who chooses employees for any con-

cern, large or small, should have the same kind of judgment and trained faculties possessed by a good purchasing agent. The quality of the individual determines the quality of the organization—and on this last depend those linked and vital things, quality of output and the reputation of the house.

### *Trying Out Inefficients Rather Than Intelligent Selection Always Bad Practice*

The ideal force is that which turns itself only at long intervals. In that way lie efficiency of effort, understanding and co-operation with the management, reduction of spoiled work and broken tools—in one word, economy of manufacture. Trying out inefficients as a substitute for intelligent selection works another evil to the company practising it, by spreading the report of easy discharges and the difficulty of holding a job or “making good.” Applicants shy away from such factories, since every discharge is a black mark on a man’s record—particularly dreaded by the steady, self-respecting workmen the house desires most to secure.

In recent years this consideration carries tremendous weight. The enormous increase in production and the failure of existing apprentice systems have made it difficult even for factories in the most favorable locations to engage as many high-grade mechanics and machine tenders as they need. For concerns removed from the great labor markets and tagged with the name of “hiring and firing” with little regard for the individual, the securing of skilled labor has become a costly and strenuous task. To one company of this character, known to the writer, the cost of the additional tool-makers required by changes in models

and by augmented sales ranged from \$100 to \$200 each. This included the traveling expenses of the foremen who engaged the men and the bonus for moving exacted by the latter. This firm had followed the "try out" method until it had become a double burden on the business.

Contrast with this "hit and miss" process, the system of another well-known company which has recognized that the intelligent hiring of factory and office men is a trade apart from the executive conduct of a division or department. Though distant from the leading labor centers, the reputation of its labor bureau for giving a fair hearing and a square deal to every applicant not patently undesirable has gone abroad and brought many pilgrims to its doors seeking places. With a normal pay roll of about 3,000 names, no less than 42,000 candidates for jobs presented themselves within two years. It is worth noting that seventy-five per cent of this number failed to pass the first tests, twenty-five per cent were rated as usable judged by the rather high company standards, and five per cent were either given employment immediately or listed for notification when vacancies should occur. The high grade of applicants attracted is indicated by the ratio of one usable man to every four presenting themselves.

### *Snap Judgment Is Not a Basis for the Best Selection*

The moral is evident. Thousands of workers take their idea of a company's labor policy—and of factory conditions, since they see nothing of the shop interiors—from the employment man, be he the superintendent interpolating rapid-fire interviews with applicants

among his other tasks, a foreman with a vacancy to be filled, or a regular agent whose first concern is to supply the factory with competent workmen. Impatience, unnecessary harshness, blunders or arbitrary decisions, refusal to deal frankly with applicants, is negative advertising which reaches the most remote corners of the country, condemns the company and ultimately limits its market to the unfortunates who have no choice but to take what offers and the independents able to exact guarantees before filling out the company's forms.

Ability to size up a man intuitively is no common gift. Most of us in arriving at the value and fitness of the prospective employee must substitute for the captain's insight, acquaintance with the qualities and the degree of skill the open place demands and knowledge of the surface marks bespeaking health, experience, intelligence, capacity, industry and honesty in the man before us. Instead of trusting to the snap judgment of the industrial prodigy, however, we have it in our power to make searching though tactful inquiry into the history and character of the applicant, thus basing our decision on facts as well as an impression too often influenced by negligible factors in the man's appearance or personality.

It is an axiom that any man worth hiring—from a laborer to an expert machinist or accountant—is worth interviewing, if only to determine the vacant niche in the organization where he will be content and his abilities will produce the best results. First impressions are valuable, but they should be corrected by diligent study of the applicant's record, personal equipment and characteristics. Many competent mechanics and office men lack the art of personal salesmanship; long service in

a single organization may make embarrassing the very necessity of applying for a place elsewhere, and only careful handling will bring out the applicant's real worth and capabilities.

The man of many jobs, on the other hand, has gone through the ordeal so often that he has learned how to present his wares in the most favorable light. He may have learned, too, just what positions are open and have planned his approach and his replies accordingly. He has keyed himself up to a special effort also and not infrequently this artificial energy and acuteness will carry him triumphantly through a brief interview and win him a position, where a more exhaustive test would have brought collapse and exposure of his incompetence or undesirability.

Wanting a man to take charge of and reorganize a special stock department recently, I was much impressed at first sight by a youngster who presented himself. He had a diploma from a small western college and a year's factory experience to recommend him, but these seemed minor considerations after five minutes' talk with him.

### *First Impressions Not Always a Correct or Sure Guide*

He appeared aggressive, intelligent, eager to take hold and develop himself—urging upon me that he wanted "to learn the business" and that his purpose was to work up through the organization to the highest level he could attain. His letter from his last employer, however, was a trifle colorless; so I asked him to call again and sent an inquiry to the head of the department in which he had been a clerk.

Before an answer came, he returned—and

displayed the limitations in outlook and brain power which killed his value. In the five minutes I gave him, he reproduced idea for idea, almost word for word, the matter of his first interview—and had nothing further to offer. He had “coached up” for our vacant place, having received a tip on just the kind of ability I was looking for, but had not the initiative or mental industry to pursue study of the subject after he had made a favorable first impression. As an alert, constructive, energetic man was needed for the vacancy, he lost his chance. And the letter from his former “boss” received two days later exactly confirmed my decision that he lacked industry, tenacity, the habit of study—everything, indeed, the job he coveted required.

Take time, then, to guard against imposition of this sort and to get at the real caliber and nature of the man before you. Some successful employment agents even refuse to hire a skilled man at the first interview, desiring to check their first impression of him by subsequent study and comparison of his account of himself after he has had a chance to forget invented details. Satisfactory references and answers to the routine questions cannot always be trusted—the good nature of his last employer may be responsible for the first, familiarity with forms may explain the second.

Too much attention can be paid to the man’s story—not, however, to the man himself. His appearance, his personality, his manner of carrying himself, his walk, the way he sits, his speech, the way he meets or avoids your glance, his features, his hands, the care he gives his person are all sign-boards advertising the quality and extent of the stock of brains and energy he carries within. It is possible for an

employer to attach too much importance to these things, to make a hobby of them. On the other hand, however, they often disclose qualities which the man wants to conceal or suggest other and valuable capacities of which he is more or less in ignorance.

### *How Personal Characteristics Form the Index of Ability*

In general the eyes give index of honesty and intelligence, the nose suggests initiative or lack of it, the chin decision and force, the mouth character. This in a normal individual—though the deficiency indicated by one feature may be more than compensated by the unusual strength of another. The hands, too, count in this outside estimate of the inner man. In a laborer or mechanic, of course, strong hands are to be expected as accompaniments of well-developed or well-trained muscles—just as calloused places on palm and fingers indicate the habit of labor. For factory workers, too, the broad, square hand always recommends its owner.

Put him at his ease as speedily as possible—then study him as, off-guard, he reveals himself. His alert manner, his apparent self respect, the grip he holds on himself may vanish the moment he conceives he has secured your confidence or sympathy. Then watch for the slump—unless his quality is genuine. If he slips down in his chair, becomes garrulous, shows eagerness to be thought knowing and a “good fellow,” he hasn’t the mental and moral fiber of the most valuable type of employee.

If he takes the matter of his employment seriously, concentrating his attention on that point until it is settled and volunteering no information not bearing directly on it, it is

likely that he will exhibit the same fixity of purpose when he tackles his day's work, and the same reserve in handling or speaking of the company's affairs. Many employment agents keep an eye on the men waiting in the outer office as well as on the man immediately in hand. The quiet, self-contained individual who secures the chair nearest the door to the inner office and neither takes part in the conversation about him nor wastes attention on newspapers or other reading, gets a favorable mark before the agent knows his name. On the other hand, the fellow who can't keep his own counsel, who takes his neighbor into his confidences or discusses the baseball games with others—unless he be a potential salesman—is set down as one who will waste his own time and that of his fellows whether he is placed in an office or a factory department.

### *What Characters to Avoid in Hiring New Workmen*

The "drifter" is glib with excuses for his various changes—the desirable man will be as brief as he is frank about the reasons for his leaving his last place. If he was discharged, he may be bitter—no capable, industrious worker can be blamed for resenting a "pay off" slip. But if he is sweeping in his condemnation of conditions at his last place, it is safe to reject him unless the agent knows from other sources that the case is much as he describes it. The confirmed "knocker" usually presents his negative credentials by word of mouth; and no degree of skill can counterbalance the effect he will have in the shop or office he is assigned to.

Nice discrimination is needed in hiring the man who is ready to take any job you can offer

him. He may be desperately sincere in his promises to leave promotion and compensation entirely in your hands, but actual contact with unworthy or ill-paid tasks usually upsets his resolution. There was the foreman of a large southern saw-mill I engaged to take charge of a gang of blacksmiths in one of our plants.

He was in appalling straits, having brought his invalid wife North and exhausted his resources so absolutely that he walked twelve miles, having no car fare, to inquire for a laborer's job at another of our works. I learned of this incident after my first interview with him, and decided that his ability to handle men would be of use in this blacksmith shop. The work done was rough and required no more than common intelligence to master it and direct the workmen. His gratitude was almost painful—yet it took him just six weeks to sicken of the work and announce that I would have to pay him more money, find him another place or lose him. Of course he was paid off.

For stock-keeper, on another occasion, I hired a young man who was a very fair accountant. With him, too, it was a question of bread-money; and though I made it clear to him that the work would be heavy and not at all like what he was accustomed to, he jumped at the chance of taking the place. He was "willing to do anything" and admitted that the seventeen and one-half cents an hour "looked good." But the mechanical nature of the work, the deadly routine, wore him out in a fortnight, and he quit with an apology. That was a mistake on my part—the company actually lost money, for he hadn't acquired either speed or facility in handling stock by the time he presented his resignation.

To make up for these disappointments,

every employment man encounters square-jawed boys who mean every word of the tiresome formula, "any job at all." There were two young college men who besieged my office two years ago, declining to take refusals when I told them I had no places for them. I told them there were no openings in the office division. They answered that they rejoiced to hear it—that they wanted factory jobs. Both were too light for truckers or department helpers, and I was at a loss to place them.

To dismiss them, I explained that the only jobs I could possibly give them were as errand boys. One was twenty, the other twenty-one—both college graduates—and I fancied they would refuse to be messengers at six dollars a week. Not a bit of it. "When do we start?" they demanded. I capitulated. They lasted five or six weeks—as messengers. By that time three or four foremen had asked me to transfer them as department clerks or "tracers." Within a year, both boys had won three or four promotions and were drawing fifteen dollars a week. Now one of them is an assistant foreman and the other is in line for similar promotion.

Haste or carelessness in interviewing applicants for jobs always is reflected in the reports of "pay-offs"—and it cannot be urged too strongly that an undue proportion of men who quit or are discharged means a serious slump in the general efficiency of the departments involved and a corresponding money loss to the company when a fresh batch of workmen are "broken in" to the vacant places.

Interviewing men in a crowd, therefore, is a costly process, though one still followed by companies which find a large number of applicants at their gates every day. It is true that

at least four men in every five who ask for work in the large cities are undesirable, and that the separation of the sheep and the goats ought to be the preliminary process.

The trouble is that the process rarely goes beyond this preliminary inquiry. The employment man, with his list of the day's wants in his hand, marches out into the crowd, picks out the most likely man, so far as externals go, and asks him what he can do, or even demands bluntly "Want a foundry job?" If the man really needs work, he will take a chance and say "yes" to almost any question the agent puts to him, trusting to adapt himself to the work after he has tackled it. Not infrequently, investigation of his fitness for the place goes no further; he is simply given a pass and sent to the department which has asked for help.

DEPT NO.	CHANGE CARD	DATE,
I DESIRE TO ADVANCE REDUCE		CHECK NO.
NOW EMPLOYED AS		ON TOOL NO.
TO POSITION OF		ON TOOL NO.
IN RATE, FROM	TO	C. PER HOUR, FOR FOLLOWING REASON
REASON		
APPROVED		
ENTERED ON RATE BOOK	GRADE	ENTERED ON EMPLOYMENT RECORD
NOTE. FOREMEN ARE REQUESTED TO MAKE OUT ONE OF THESE CARDS FOR EVERY PERMANENT CHANGE IN POSITION, OR RATE.		

FORM 1: Cards like this filled in by foremen and sent to the employment manager keep him advised of progress of all men in the plant and are a fair indication of each man's merit

Haphazard assignment of workmen like this wrongs the company as well as the workman. He is put to work without real knowledge of what he is able to do, and not infrequently he does not understand just what is expected of

him. The consequence is that he is either woefully misplaced—in which event he is speedily discharged and never makes a second attempt to secure employment with the house—or even though he makes good, his abilities

EMPLOYEES ADDRESS RECORD	
DATE: _____	
TO SUPERINTENDENTS, MANAGERS, ET AL:	
PLEASE FILL OUT A SEPARATE CARD FOR EACH EMPLOYEE, GETTING ADDRESS IN EACH CASE FROM EMPLOYEE DIRECTLY	
NAME: _____	NO. _____
ADDRESS: _____	
FLAT: _____	FRONT OR REAR: _____
IT IS NECESSARY THAT WE BE ADVISED OF ALL SUBSEQUENT CHANGES IN ADDRESS AS THIS INFORMATION FREQUENTLY IS NEEDED USE THESE CARDS FOR THAT PURPOSE ALSO	

FORM 2: Address cards filled in by the foremen and filed in the employment office, are useful in finding laid off employees. One man obtained many skilled mechanics in an emergency from such a file

fit him for a better place and he speedily sickens of his unworthy task and leaves of his own accord.

I do not mean that this happens in more than a small number of cases—the issue is that the man who quits for this reason nearly always would develop into a valuable employee if he were rightly placed. And I do know that compilation of the records of employment and “pay-offs” in a large eastern house employing 8,000 men disclosed recently that the force was turning itself in fourteen months. Traced down, this unprofitable condition was found to be due to the hasty and unintelligent methods of interviewing and assigning men to the departments.

Reorganization of the employment department cut the “pay-offs” squarely in two in six

weeks and trebled the previous average of transfers among the departments, with a corresponding increase in efficiency and the individual co-operation of the men. Yet the changes involved only the addition of an assistant employment agent and an extra clerk. Besides the installing of an "occupation file" listing all employees with two or more trades—a census of the factory departments was made for this purpose—the chief departure was that the interviewer in talking to the men at the gate, picked out his likely applicants for all the places above common laborer and sent them in to his office for a closer inquiry into their ability and experience before he attempted to assign them to the departments needing them.

This, indeed, is the process followed at the best organized city plants I know. The riff-raff is weeded out with small ceremony and the skilled, responsible men given every opportunity to tell what they can do, what they want to do and what they will do. The employment man then culls out each class of workers he wants and sizes up the fellows who offer themselves.



## II

### PERSONAL INTERVIEWS IN HIRING MEN

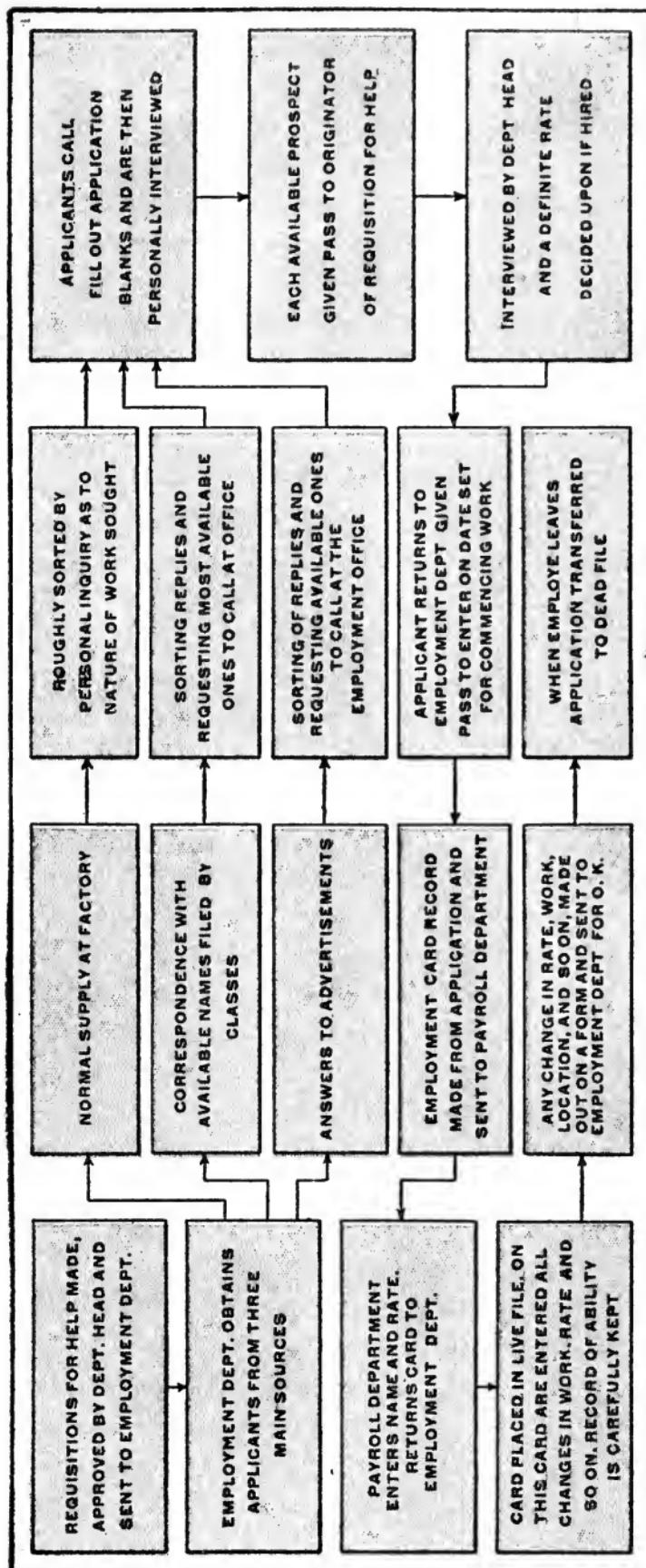
**T**O WHOM it may concern" letters are of little value as references. But in hiring skilled workers of any sort, it is worth while at least to secure a confidential report from the man's last employer. Address your query to the foreman for whom the applicant worked, securing his name for that purpose. Letters to the general manager may fail to bring a response on the very points you wish to emphasize. Usually the answer will be prompt and honest, for employers are coming to understand that their interests in this respect are mutual. If an applicant is asked for references, he should understand that they will be consulted as speedily as possible; then no delay in making the inquiry should be allowed. It is neither fair to the man nor just to the company, which may thus lose the services of a valuable workman.

It is obvious that the character and reputation of the former employers should influence your estimate of the man, his probable worth, and the weight to be given their statements

about him. Too much dependence must not be placed on them. It often happens that a firm will bear a grudge against an efficient man who has resigned and will attempt to punish him by refusing a recommendation. Several instances have come under my observation. In one case this manner of treatment was accorded by a big lumber company to a former superintendent who applied to me for a position as yard foreman. He explained that he could not hope for a favorable report from his former employers, narrating the circumstances of his resignation. His reasons seemed good, and when the expected "knock" came along, I disregarded it and hired him on the strength of his experience and the impression he had made on me.

A similar case was that of the chief buyer of a large Eastern company who quit because of a cut in his salary. The firm retaliated with unfavorable reports of his work and actually kept him unplaced for some time. I took him on as assistant purchasing agent because of his length of service before the disagreement and his knowledge of market conditions; his record has been eminently satisfactory. Bias like this must be provided against, since every capable workman turned away means a positive money loss to the company.

These are the general considerations which apply to the selection of factory workers of every grade, every degree of skill. In dealing with each class, however, there are certain additional qualities to be borne in mind since each of the three great classifications requires distinct powers of mind and body purchasable at varying prices, and offering, therefore, opportunity for important wage economies or disastrous extravagances, as the employment



FORM 3: In the left top corner help is requisitioned. Following the arrows we see how it is obtained from three sources; in the right top corner, applicants are interviewed; next sent to department needing help. The head of the department if satisfied sends the employee back to the employment department. In the left-hand column we see how he is enrolled and on the bottom line how he is handled

man is alive to or indifferent to the needs of the departments and the current state of the labor market.

### *Some of the Points to be Considered in Hiring Men*

The great industrial concerns, which hire laborers literally in herds, submit them to no tests except size, age, physical condition and nationality.

Nationality cuts a figure because the laborers in their plants are almost wholly foreigners, speaking no English. Not only must the bosses under whom they work know their language in order to handle them effectively—a sufficient reason for limiting members of any department to one nationality—but experience has taught the management that each race has aptitude for certain kinds of work. If inside workers are wanted, Poles, Hungarians, Austrians are hired. If outside men, choice runs to Irish, Scandinavians, Germans, Italians.

Raw recruits, however, need direction in finding the places best fitted for their talents. I recall a grocer's driver who applied for a place as file clerk in the office division. He had a splendid young body, honesty was written all over him, likewise, intelligence and native wit. The briefest inquiry elicited the fact, however, that he lacked the education necessary for even a mediocre office man. I explained this to him and suggested that he start in the factory. He saw my point and took a six-dollar job as errand boy in the machine shop. He was sincere in wanting to learn and hustled through his routine tasks as though they were the most important affairs in the business.

At the end of six months, he had every job

foreman and mechanic in the shop anxious to "show him how" and the boss promoted him to be a helper and gave him a simple machine to tend. In another six months, he was making modest little suggestions of short cuts and economies, and at the end of his second year was admittedly the best operator in the milling and profiling sections of the shop. In spite of his youth—he was only twenty-two at the time—he was made a sub-foreman in charge of these sections at the end of his third year, and his path to the head of the whole shop is reasonably straight. Now he might have made a good file clerk, supplied his lack of arithmetic, writing, bookkeeping in night schools, but I doubt whether he would have "made good" so emphatically as he did in the factory where his fragmentary schooling was not so severe a handicap on his own progress or the development of his usefulness to the house.

#### *Another Class of Men Who Require Attention of a Different Sort*

The man who "wants to get into another line of work," however, sometimes turns out a serious problem. For instance, a mail carrier asked for a carpenter's job just when we needed twenty or thirty rough workmen for some temporary construction that had to be hurried. His experience was limited to odd jobs about his own house or his neighbor's places, but he was so firm in his belief that he could develop into an expert carpenter, and I wanted men so badly, that I took him on, simply warning him that I might not be able to keep him after the current rush was over.

It was a "saw and hatchet" job, and he had little difficulty in satisfying the foreman so long as the rough work held out. On the first

list the latter handed in for "pay-offs," however, the mail carrier was included. I took the matter up with the foreman, explaining the circumstances and asking if he could not carry the fellow until he could develop something like a journeyman's skill. His answer was negative; the postman was intelligent enough, but he had the ineradicable clumsiness which clings very often to men who take up hand work after thirty. Nothing was left, of course, but to pay the man off.

He refused to accept the foreman's decision, however, carried the thing up to the "front office," brought various social and church influences to bear, and eventually was reinstated on the theory that since he had given up a "life job" to come with the company, his discharge so soon would stir up public opinion against the company. Luckily, he was earnest and industrious and the foreman, having him on his hands, took the trouble to teach him his trade. But the lesson emphasized the danger of hiring a man with a permanent occupation for a temporary job; or of taking the risk involved in helping a middle-aged man to switch to a new trade or avocation.

"Where have you worked?" then, is a question not less important than "Have you a trade?" Here the value of the capable employment man is clearly in evidence. If he has grasped the full measure of his opportunities and made a careful study of first principles, he knows the character of the men employed in all the larger establishments in the zone, from which he draws his supply, the shop conditions in each case, the wage rates, the quality of output; and is able from this knowledge to make a shrewd estimate of the applicant's ability to measure up to the standards of his own

company. Of the various trades, also, he knows enough to get at the true capacity of the man before him, to puncture his pretenses if any are put forward, to determine just what his value will be if he is added to the house organization. In all honesty the applicant may claim that he is a tool maker when actually he has only made dies and simple jigs or repaired broken tools. Half a dozen knowing questions, however, will put him in his rightful classification—make it clear whether he is worth the wages he asks.

Or he may declare that he is a first-class mechanic and admit in the next breath that his earnings were twenty cents an hour. Here again information of the rates obtaining in other factories would be of use in determining the applicant's probable usefulness. In some smaller towns where rent and living expenses are low, high-grade men sometimes draw wages no larger than handy men in the larger cities.

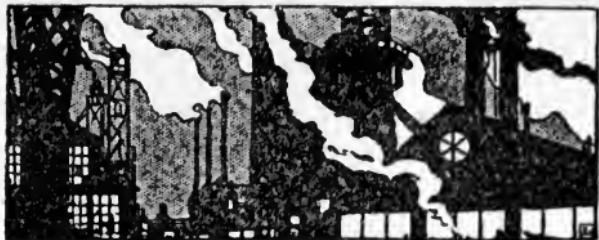
*Test the Man Who Can Do Everything. It is Probable He is Not Efficient in Anything*

Prove the mechanic who asserts that he can "do anything" in his line. The most profitable kind of skill, looking from the employer's side, follows only on devotion to some specialty. Belief in his own all-round ability, especially if the man be young, is often a "tinkerer's" ignorance of the niceties of his craft. If his experience has been in small shops—the only situation offering all-round training nowadays—the chances are that he has acquired a smattering of many things, but missed the proficiency in one calling about which the modern factory system is built. If he comes from a big shop, his boast may mean simply that he was shifted from job to job in the vain hope

that he might find one he was qualified to hold.

Be wary of the man who asks too many detail questions. If he is serious and capable, three things interest him to the exclusion of all else: He wants steady, congenial labor, opportunity to make good wages and working conditions which will neither menace his health or eyesight nor limit his output. If he wants to know how the time is kept, how long the lunch hour is or how the street cars run, he either lacks common initiative or is a "fusser" whom acquaintance with the shop methods will evolve into a full-fledged critic and mischief-maker.

"Get out or get in line" has become a proverb among employers, and if the applicant has the temperament or habit of mind likely to antagonize the company's aims or methods or to refuse acceptance of conditions as they exist, it is a serious error to hire him except as a stop-gap until a more acceptable man can be secured.



### III

## HIRING UNSKILLED WORKMEN

**W**HEN workmen apply at the employment office, they range themselves naturally into three groups. First come the unskilled laborers—truckers, janitors, shovellers, material handlers—men of mighty thews and sinews under poor control, lacking the brain development, experience or training which would fit them for anything but routine muscular effort.

In the second class there are found semi-skilled “handy men”—assemblers, operators of drill and punch presses, milling, molding and a hundred other half-automatic machines—possessing intelligence, adaptability and some knowledge of tools, but untrained in the exact use of them or the possibilities that lie in them. Third, and most important, are skilled workmen—mechanics, tool and pattern makers, machinists, hand molders, cabinet makers. Having served apprenticeships they are credited with all-around knowledge of their trades; but in practice they are usually specialists, the factory system directing their skill towards perfection in a circumscribed field.

With the need for these three classes of

workmen in the average factory, what are the essentials to be kept in mind in hiring individuals in each class—remembering that any skill or brain power in excess of actual requirements must be paid for, either in money or in the discontent which accompanies tasks uncongenial or beneath the man's best abilities? Neither must the fact be overlooked that in an "open shop" intelligence and industry, because of the division of labor, can break down the barriers hedging the semi-skilled and skilled occupations—likewise that the mechanic who works up from the laborer's level in the company's employ, generally repays in loyalty and efficiency the time spent on his training.

First and foremost hire a sound body for every job. In a laborer, vigor and muscular development are everywhere recognized as essentials. Less attention, however, is paid to the health and physical condition of factory and office workers whose duties do not require sustained bodily effort.

Yet health is quite as important for the mechanic or machine tender whose eye must be true, and hand be steady if he is not to exceed his allowed margin of error and is to keep his proportion of spoiled work at a minimum. Not only is the output of the healthy man greater than the weakling's but its quality is higher, his lost days are fewer and the man himself is less liable to accidents due to fatigue, overstrain and dulled faculties.

If there be a poorer reason for hiring a man than a "hard luck story," it is pity for the applicant's ill-health. Even when sympathy clouds the judgment of the employment man, the inexorable law of department averages soon marks the delinquent for dismissal. The

place of health and sound limbs in the equipment of employees is recognized in the regulation of all the larger and more progressive organizations and a man must pass a physical examination before he signs the pay roll. In the smaller factory, the eyes of the employment agent must do the work of the physician's stethoscope.

Like reasons command the rejection of any individual bearing signs of drink or dissipation. Competition has cut profit margins to the minimum, and two or three Monday-idle machines in any group make serious inroads on the department's earnings.

The standard, therefore, which the employment agent must hold to, is the man who will produce a regular output every working day of the year. Exceptional skill, even genius, is out of place in a factory organization unless it submits itself to the discipline supporting the mediocre majority.

### *What is Demanded Most in Hiring Unskilled Workmen*

Bodily strength, of course, is the unskilled man's stock in trade. Add a brain sufficiently awake to grasp the most effective way of performing the routine duties assigned to him or to carry out the directions of a gang boss, and you have the minimum measure of a laborer. His hands will tell you whether he is accustomed to toil; his shoulders, legs, arms whether he has the physical force to perform the tasks you would set him at. His manner of moving and standing will indicate alertness or stupidity, initiative or a habit of dependence. Clumsiness may be interpreted as lack of intelligence, sluggish motion as an index of slow thinking or dearth of energy—and you are

purchasing not brawn, merely, but available man-power.

Age is important. Eighteen to thirty-five are the years of maximum vigor, though a laborer of forty-five with a particular set of highly developed muscles is an admirable investment if he be healthy and you need a specialist of his stripe. Size is a matter of moment only when the work demands weight, such as trucking, handling heavy materials and the like. The well-knit man of medium size makes up in quickness, stamina and adaptability for any pounds he may lack.

Since the rolling stone is undesirable, length of service in his last place should count, especially if the company be known as an employer of good men, and the applicant's reasons for changing will pass muster. If he be married, that is an additional guarantee of steadiness, industry, sobriety—his responsibilities will anchor him to the new job. Character, honesty, self-respect are qualities which the man's face, his appearance, his previous record will affirm or deny as belonging to him.

This is the laborer reduced to a common denominator. If you want a trucker who will remain a trucker indefinitely, you need study your applicant no further.

Even with such simple requirements, it is sometimes difficult, however, to secure men. Resort to unusual methods even in the great central market for unskilled men is sometimes demanded. Heavy shipments of iron and coal recently swamped the unloading gang at a plant I was interested in, and the superintendent sent in a hurry call for men to save the \$100 a day demurrage which the blockade in our yards was costing. At least one hundred men were needed, while it happened that the mar-

## EMPLOYMENT CHART

	LABORERS AND HELPERS	SAWERS	SHAPERS	PLAVERS	SCRING MACHINE	JOINTERS	SENDERS	CARVERS	MOLDERS	ROUGH AND SEAT MAKERS	FRAMERS AND PANELERS	SURFACERS	FINISHERS	PASTERS	MACHINE	TOP BOW BUILDERS	COVERING	TOP BOW SETTING
LUMBER / IRD AND DRY KILN																		
MACHINE DEPT.																		
BENDING DEPT.																		
UNDERBODY DEPT.																		
SEAT DEPT.																		
ASSEMBLY DEPT																		
SHIPPING																		
HILLWRIGHT																		
STORES																		
BOW SETTING DEPT.																		
BOW COVERING DEPT																		
CUTTING DEPT.																		
STITCHING DEPT.																		
PASTING DEPT.																		
TOP BUILDING																		

FORM 4: A card form or blackboard arranged in this way and carrying a list of all help wanted aids the employment man in keeping track of his needs. The blackboard is easily cleaned and the items readjusted as necessary

ket, just at the opening of lake navigation, was empty of the type demanded.

Recourse was had, therefore, to every agency available. Display advertisements were run in all the penny newspapers and in all the foreign papers, particularly the Italian, Lithuanian and Hungarian dailies. Agents were dispatched also along the harbor front in search of longshoremen, particularly the organized gangs of stevedores which make contracts for the unloading of vessels, doing all the work themselves and dividing the remuneration. Two such gangs were rounded up and hustled out to the works, while practically every able-bodied man who applied at the downtown employment office was also dispatched to the plant.

#### *An Unusual Method Adopted to Secure Unskilled Men*

The second morning an intelligent Italian presented himself, among other of his countrymen, and asking for one of the roustabout jobs, pleaded for permanent employment and explained that he had been a gang boss in railroad track elevation.

“Can’t you round up thirty or forty men you know and bring them in?” I asked. “I’ll pay you, or I’ll give you a steady job on the inside if you make good.”

He leaped at the chance. That afternoon, he sent in thirty Italians before five o’clock, and telephoned asking us if he could keep on sending men after six o’clock. I kept the office open until nine o’clock. At that hour he appeared with the last draft of seven men, bringing his total up to fifty.

Of the half hundred, forty passed muster, and I sent him out to the plant the next day

with a note to the superintendent suggesting that he be given a place as gang foreman over some of his own men. He "made good" emphatically, the costly blockade was broken in four days and my Italian was rewarded with a permanent job as a gang foreman in the factory yards. Our newspaper advertising on this occasion cost more than \$100, our direct search for stevedores about \$50, while the hiring of the forty Italians cost virtually nothing. In the future, too, that Italian gang foreman will be a valuable resource when the company wants a number of laborers for short terms and wants them in a hurry.

Harnessing raw man-power to tread mill tasks, however, is not the only function of the employment agent in most American factories. Fortunately for both employer and employee, manual labor is looked on as the first rung in the ladder which leads up to the successive planes of handy man, mechanic, even foreman. The demand for skilled workers far exceeds the supply, and will probably continue so for some years.

#### *Some of the Ideals to Attain in Hiring Unskilled Laborers*

The wise employment man, therefore, hires laborers whose youth, mental equipment and ambition make it possible to develop them either by direct or merely incidental training into machine tenders or mechanics of the specialist type. Indeed, the chance to rise in this way may be used as an added inducement to young men who otherwise could never be secured as truckers and department laborers.

Wherever this educational process is not forbidden by a contract with trades-unions, no more satisfactory method of filling vacancies

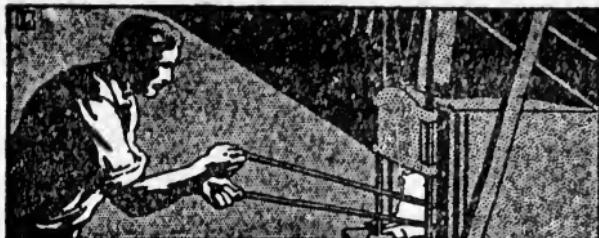
in the semi-skilled ranks could be devised than the hiring of capable, lusty young men as factory laborers.

To secure the highest type of tool makers, pattern makers and machinists, undoubtedly experience in other shops is necessary; but mastery of a half-automatic machine can be attained without the two or three years' apprenticeship on which the unions insist for obvious defensive reasons.

*Tested Out Applicants Are Easily and  
Quickly "Broken in"*

An instance in my own experience will serve to show that with the right material this "breaking in" is a question of weeks instead of years. At the outset of one of the industrial booms the company for which I did the hiring was compelled to put on a night force in all the mill departments. At the time, the factory was a closed shop. Union men could not be secured in the numbers we required, and the local council was forced to consent to the rapid fire training of forty milling machine and drill press operators to meet the emergency.

From our truckers, clerks and department helpers, I chose a score of young men, taking the other twenty from my lists of town and country boys who were eager to enter the company's employ, if a chance of bettering themselves offered. All of them were of fair capacity, had common school education and appreciated the chance to learn a trade in a hurry. As we had jigs and gauges for every machine operation involved, the degree of skill required was soon learned.



## IV

### HIRING SEMI-SKILLED WORKMEN

**S**EMI-SKILLED "handy men"—assemblers, drill and punch press operators, milling and molding machine hands, and tenders of the hundred and one half-automatic machines, form the second great class into which labor, as a whole, may be divided.

In hiring these semi-skilled men no better test exists for industry, intelligence and fiber than hard manual labor. If a man cheerfully "wrestles" his truck, or "puts his back" into lifting castings, he will not lack energy or diligence when promoted to a machine or given opportunity to use his kit of tools. It is well to have a few men of this type at hand for emergencies, but it is useless to expect to keep them long at rough labor.

Expert knowledge or skill, however limited in scope, must be employed at its proper work or its efficiency will drop below the standard of the class to which it is reduced. As a temporary makeshift, while waiting for a regular berth, a tool maker may serve as a handy man, a machine tender as laborer, a bookkeeper or

stenographer as a clerk. But always the reaction against mechanical and uninteresting toil comes, and if the agreeable task be not provided, the man quits or "fires himself."

For this reason there is never profit in engaging a short term man unless it be for a brief rush season or to relieve some other temporary stress. Honesty in stating the conditions to the applicant, too, is imperative, if the company's name is to remain good.

Experience, brain power, adaptability are the vital qualities to look for in a semi-skilled worker. In native mental and physical equipment, he must be almost the equal of the skilled worker—the latter's apprenticeship making the real difference in capacity. Indeed the two classes may almost be treated as one so far as natural qualifications go. It is in the closely related matter of training and experience that the distinction must be emphasized. If a mechanic or handy man satisfies the primary requirements of health, freedom from physical defects and bad habits; if he be of suitable age—forty-five is the maximum generally allowed, though the skill of blacksmiths, tool hardeners, saw smiths and a few other highly individualized craftsmen often reaches its top limit at this age—and carry the outward marks of brains and self-respect, he is worth careful attention.

#### *General Experience Counts for Much in Hiring Men*

Experience counts for much, because it has shaped the applicant and given him ineradicable standards of what constitutes quality and finish. Therefore hire mechanics and handy mechanics and handy men who have been employed in plants using your own types of

APPLICATION FOR EMPLOYMENT  
MANUFACTURING DEPARTMENT

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

NAME IN FULL \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ FLAT \_\_\_\_\_ FRONT \_\_\_\_\_ REAR \_\_\_\_\_

KIND OF WORK WANTED \_\_\_\_\_ WAGES EXPECTED \_\_\_\_\_

DATE OF BIRTH \_\_\_\_\_ NATIONALITY \_\_\_\_\_

EDUCATION \_\_\_\_\_

WHAT LANGUAGES DO YOU SPEAK? \_\_\_\_\_ AND WRITE? \_\_\_\_\_

SINGLE OR MARRIED \_\_\_\_\_ WHOM DO YOU SUPPORT? \_\_\_\_\_

STATE CONDITION OF HEALTH \_\_\_\_\_ ARE YOU RUPTURED? \_\_\_\_\_

HAVE YOU ANY CHRONIC DISEASES? \_\_\_\_\_

HAVE YOU ANY DEFECT IN EIGHT, HEARING, SPEECH OR LIMB? \_\_\_\_\_

WHEN WERE YOU LAST VACCINATED? \_\_\_\_\_ ARE YOUR WAGES ASSIGNED? \_\_\_\_\_

GIVE NAMES OF YOUR RELATIVES IN THIS COMPANY'S EMPLOY \_\_\_\_\_

IF A BOY OR A GIRL, GIVE NAME AND ADDRESS OF YOUR FATHER \_\_\_\_\_

WERE YOU EVER EMPLOYED BY THIS COMPANY? \_\_\_\_\_

## PREVIOUS EMPLOYMENT

GIVE NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF FIRMS YOU HAVE WORKED FOR	KIND OF WORK DONE	HOW LONG EMPLOYED	DATE OF LEAVING	WAGES RECEIVED	REASONS FOR LEAVING

## APPRENTICESHIP: WHEN AND WHERE SERVED

## REFERENCES

GIVE NAMES ETC. OF 3 PERSONS (INDY RELATIVES) WHO HAVE KNOWN YOU DURING PAST 5 YEARS

NAME	ADDRESS	BUSINESS OR OCCUPATION

INTRODUCED BY \_\_\_\_\_

SENT TO DEPT: \_\_\_\_\_ FOREMAN: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ GIVEN BOOK RULES PRINTED IN: \_\_\_\_\_

FORM 5: This style of application blank has been used by a large western firm with satisfaction and is designed to bring out all the information necessary, without unduly harassing the applicant. Many good men are driven away by too exhaustive inquiry

machines or producing work of approximately equal grade.

Builders of typewriters, fire-arms, adding machines, cash registers are schooled to much the same standard of quality, for instance—accuracy and exact adjustment of parts being the first ideal. Therefore machine operators, assemblers or tool makers from any of the plants in this group find it easy to accommodate their hands and their brains to the requirements in any other member of the group. In the same manner, wagon, plow, harvester and implement factories trade men with ease and safety, as do all sorts of engine works, foundries, textile factories and the multitude of smaller industries using merchant steel as their raw material.

As is the case in employing unskilled men, attention should be paid to the future development of the employee in hiring semi-skilled mechanics. Watch for that jewel among workmen who has had foresight enough to acquire a trade allied to his regular avocation as insurance against idleness in dull seasons. It is this command of alternate trades or all-round acquaintance with one which makes German or English trained mechanics valuable despite their leisurely ways.

### *How One Man with an Alternate Trade Was Discovered*

This extra capacity is not always advertised by the mechanic possessing it. It is my rule to learn whether an applicant has more than one trade at his command—in order to make emergency transfers from a department which is running slack to another overburdened with orders. I remember one mechanic engaged by correspondence, who struck me as a man of

unusual resource and mentality, but insisted that pattern-making, the thing for which he was hired, was his only vocation.

Set to work on a series of new and intricate tools, he proved himself an expert at his craft. He suggested some changes in the design, incorporating them in his patterns. But the tool-room finding his methods foreign to its usual practice, had difficulty in reproducing his patterns, and he was called in for consultation. In ten minutes he demonstrated just how the patterns could be reproduced, exhibiting such knowledge of processes and skill in applying them that the foreman said bluntly: "You must be a tool-maker."

The new man admitted that he had made tools as well as patterns all his life. Explaining to me why he concealed his double skill, he declared that his last employers—small manufacturers—had shifted him from pattern and tool-making to sharpening and repair jobs nearly every week, and had cut his rate each time they set him at the less difficult tasks, thus actually penalizing him for his extra skill. I transferred him the same day and six weeks later signed the slip advancing him to job foreman in his new department.

#### *Select New Workmen Who Will Harmonize with Your Force*

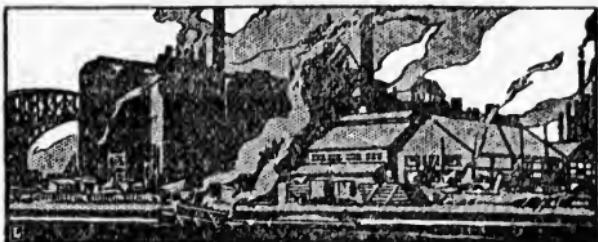
Semi-skilled as well as the skilled employees must be judiciously placed in the factory. Foremen are often a stumbling block in the effective operation of a department, but the difficult foreman has qualities which make him invaluable to the house. When such is the case, the employment man must do his best not to hire temperaments which will clash with that of the boss in question. As illustration, I

engaged an assembler a few years ago who gave every promise of making a splendid workman and developing ultimately into a foreman of unusual drive and power. He was young, his energy was dynamic, his face and head as well as his manner showed him to be combative to the last degree—a quality possessed by most of the men who "do things."

### *Right Apportioning of Men Brings Good Results*

I hired him for a department whose head was placid, even-tempered, hard to rouse. But I was away from the factory in search of screw-makers when he reported, and my assistant assigned him, because of a sudden press of hurry orders, to the room of a foreman as combative as the new man himself. The explosion occurred the second day—two job foremen pulled the men apart. My new assembler was paid off and the company lost an employee who was a positive addition to the organization, simply because my assistant did not take his temper and strong individuality into account when he changed his assignment.

For the same psychological reason, the agent should keep before him the circumstances surrounding the place he offers the man. The employment man is paid to assemble a harmonious machine. In introducing a new cog, then, he is wise to reject any which patently will not mesh with those already in place, unless the boss cog's peculiarities are hurting the business.



# V

## HIRING SKILLED WORKMEN

TOO much thought cannot be given to the examination of high-grade mechanics and handy men. They form the backbone of the factory organization, set the pace for the whole machine, hold the reputation of the company in their hands. All that has been said about health, freedom from roving and convivial habits, and general education applies with double force to these skilled men. Thrift is a more certain indicator of steadiness even than possession of a family; so if an applicant owns or has owned property or has a savings account tucked away, the circumstance is worth noting.

A record of frequent changes may add to his value, if he be a young man, since three or four factories have contributed to his education, and comparison of shop practice and methods have added to his mastery of his trade. If he be past thirty, however, and his stays in successive factories show no lengthening tendency, it may be assumed that he is a rover and not to be counted upon as a permanent workman. In a man under twenty-five, the character of the factory where he served his

apprenticeship is important. As he takes on age and experience, however, the shops where he has been employed become the chief measure of his worth as a workman.

Ask him if he knows anyone in your own factory. Good workmen flock together. Quiet, dependable men make no friendships with erratic or roistering fellows. Mechanics have a pride in their craft, as a rule, which precludes association with sloth or incompetence. If your man has a trade demanding hand tools, learn how many of these he owns and if they be of standard makes. If he has plenty of good tools it evinces interest in his work as well as a provident habit, and makes it unnecessary to lend from the company's supply. If his kit is small or the tools mediocre he is likely to make trouble by borrowing from bench mates and turn out to be a slovenly workman.

In engaging a high-grade man, it is worth while to bring him into direct contact with the machines or the work with which he professes himself familiar. If he be incompetent, a brief examination will betray his lack of skill and knowledge. Five minutes spent in the shop will give the foreman a chance to "size him up" and thereby check the employment man's conclusions. Given a glimpse of the shop, too, the man if he have acid instead of iron in his blood, will scarcely resist the temptation to criticise the equipment, the other workmen, the methods or the product, and thus exhibit the fatal weakness before concealed.

### *Guard Your Plant Always Against the Chronic Faultfinder*

If he be a faultfinder or meddler, no degree of skill or technical knowledge will outweigh a man's mischievous tongue. Not long ago I

made an exception from this rule and employed a brass worker of unusual equipment. He was 34 years old and master of his trade from every angle, having served as melter, molder, filer, fitter, finisher and polisher.

He had worked in seven foundries and during our five minutes talk he made some sarcastic allusion to the conduct of every one of them. But the three firms to whom I wrote gave him such an excellent character as a workman and our need of a man of his caliber was so acute that I disregarded his temperament and put him on, warning him that he would have to accept the company's policies or lose his new place. He promised to tend strictly to business and for a month kept his pledge and did splendid work. He suggested several valuable changes in methods, and I entertained hopes that he would stick and eventually become a boss.

The itch for characteristic expression, however, was too strong. By the end of the second month his ridicule of the foreman's methods and the company's department rules had affected the discipline, his mastery of his trade giving him immense influence on the other men. At the end of the tenth week he was paid off to save the department from disorganization; and it required nearly six months to restore the harmony existing before he entered it. My exception has proved my rule—I will never hire a "knocker" again on any terms.

The final question is that of wages. It is a mistaken policy, according to my experience, to hire a man for the smallest amount he will accept or to pay him the maximum rate at the beginning. All lines of factory work have a starting point generally recognized as equitable, a man requiring some time to "get the

hang" of unfamiliar tasks and accustom himself to his new surroundings and having, naturally, less value to his employer during this period.

If the company has been paying the accepted rate to others, there is no real profit in beating an applicant down because he needs work badly. He discovers the first day that advantage has been taken of his position to drive a hard bargain. Dissatisfaction follows immediately, he does not give the company his best efforts, he takes the first opportunity to demand an increase or seek another situation.

Fair treatment, on the contrary, gives him an initial impulse of enthusiasm and an abiding desire to clinch his hold on a permanent place with a company willing to deal so justly with its employee. He will apply himself to speedy mastery of the job assigned him, and the increase in his output for a single day will sometimes repay the additional wage for a whole week.

You are paying mechanics of his grade 37 1-2 cents an hour, say, the rate having been established as necessary to secure the kind of men required. Being out of a job, or coming from a smaller town where cheap rent and lower living expenses kept wages at a lower level, he may be willing to start at 30 cents an hour. My idea of a square deal, both to the company and the man, would be to give him 32 1-2 cents an hour, if I had made sure that he would be able to do the work, knowing that he would do more and better work because his pride and self-respect had not been humbled by the last turn of the screw.

On the other hand, to pay him the full rate for a seasoned workman from the beginning would create dissatisfaction among the men al-

APPLICATION FOR POSITION  
OFFICE DEPARTMENT

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

NAME OF APPLICANT IN FULL \_\_\_\_\_

RESIDENCE \_\_\_\_\_ P. O. ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

STATE SPECIFICALLY, KIND OF POSITION DESIRED \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

AGE \_\_\_\_\_ NATIONALITY \_\_\_\_\_

SALARY WANTED \_\_\_\_\_ PER \_\_\_\_\_

GIVE EDUCATIONAL PREPARATION IN FULL \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

IF A BOY! DO YOU LIVE WITH YOUR PARENTS? \_\_\_\_\_

HAVE YOU ANY OUTSIDE BUSINESS INTERESTS? \_\_\_\_\_

ARE THERE ANY JUDGMENTS STANDING AGAINST YOU? \_\_\_\_\_

STATE CONDITION OF HEALTH \_\_\_\_\_ HAVE YOU ANY CHRONIC DISEASES? \_\_\_\_\_

EXPLAIN FULLY ANY DEFECT YOU MAY HAVE IN EYESIGHT, HEARING, SPEECH OR LIMB \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_IF A BOY! GIVE NAME AND ADDRESS OF YOUR FATHER. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## PREVIOUS EMPLOYMENT

GIVE NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF FIRMS YOU HAVE WORKED FOR	KIND OF WORK DONE	HOW LONG EMPLOYED	DATE OF LEAVING	WAGES RECEIVED	REASONS FOR LEAVING

APPRENTICESHIP. WHEN AND WHERE SERVED

## REFERENCES

GIVE NAMES ETC. OF 6 PERSONS NOT RELATIVES WHO HAVE KNOWN YOU DURING PAST 5 YEARS

NAME	ADDRESS	BUSINESS OR OCCUPATION

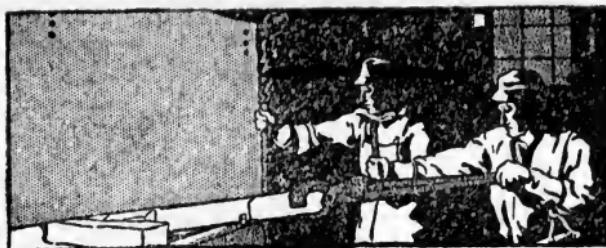
INTRODUCED BY \_\_\_\_\_

SENT TO DEPT. \_\_\_\_\_ MANAGER \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_ GIVEN BOOK RULES PRINTED IN \_\_\_\_\_

FORM 6: This office application blank is aimed at the characteristics of the young applicant who has little commercial experience. It is used by a firm which likes to train good material its own way

ready employed, and the man himself, if he had only the usual amount of ambition would expect an increase after his "breaking in" was complete, arguing that since he was worth the full rate at the start, the increase in his output gave his subsequent services greater value.

Not that I would counsel indiscriminate generosity. As the purchasing agent must buy materials at the lowest market price, the employment man, to be successful, must hire at the lowest wages which will command permanent efficiency. The essential difference between the position of the two men is that the purchasing agent can hold his sellers to their agreements while the employment man must consider the hundred subtle ways in which his contracts can be evaded or broken.



## VI

### PROMOTING MEN FROM THE RANKS

**T**O keep his office and factory departments supplied with competent men secured at reasonable rates is the work of the employment agent. Therefore his first concerns are the sources from which he can draw recruits, the methods of keeping in touch with the various labor markets and the ways of reaching and securing individuals who would be desirable additions to the force.

Three sources of skilled and semi-skilled men for both divisions exist—except in the case of very large industries, the floating supply of laborers will prove adequate. For the better classes of workers, the company's own organization is the one to be considered first. The quality of any man on your pay roll can be easily arrived at by inquiry of his foreman and his fellow workers—the man from outside is always an unknown quantity, no matter how well he "sizes up," until he is tried in his new berth. If you can find a man to fill the vacant place inside your office or factory, then you save time, effort and the considerable cost of "breaking in" a stranger.

More important than this first obvious reason, however, is the effect on the organization of a policy of "giving your own men the first chance." In every large factory, particularly if the year have its dull seasons or the product is made to order, some departments find it necessary to "lay off" men at intervals or employ them on tasks less profitable to the house. In most of the departments, also, if the hiring man has been wise, there are individuals who have taken temporary jobs below their real capacity in the hope that later an opening for them will appear in their regular occupation. Likewise, ambitious truckers have been studying machine operations at odd moments and have acquired skill enough to move up a peg to the semi-skilled plane, or "handy men" who in night schools or by correspondence course have earned the rating of mechanics. In the office division, if the organization is healthy there is the same progression from messenger to clerk, from clerk to accountant or stenographer, from specialist to department head.

These ambitious or underrated employees form the internal or factory supply. It is the employment man's business to keep in touch with all of them, to give them the preference when the better place for which any of them is fitted offers or to transfer the superfluous man, when a department is overmanned, to the place where his services are needed.

Permanency of employment and opportunity of advancement are the magnets which draw good men to an organization and hold them faithful in the face of increased pay offered by other companies. They make powerfully, too, for loyalty, efficiency and alertness in individuals, since these are the qualities which win promotion from the ranks. In the

FORM 7: An envelope printed this way, makes an excellent employment record folder. In the left-hand column under "which" the initials of the code are used, for example, A (engaged) 3/8/13, B (advanced) 10/2/13, and so on. In the right-hand column "A.R.No." stands for "Accident Report Number." The photograph will help prevent many substitution frauds; also it will familiarize the employment men with the force.

same way, a disposition to "take care of" every worker who has been doing his honest best by transfer when his particular work fails, evokes a corresponding spirit of co-operation, fidelity and solidarity among the men themselves.

Not only must the employer buy quality but he must make terms which will prevent deterioration from the initial standard. In this he is sometimes aided, sometimes hampered, by the local market conditions, while the purchasing agent has no limit but the country's visible supplies and the freight tariff schedules.

Keeping in touch with departmental conditions is a matter of observation and inquiry. As a rule a foreman or department head cannot be wholly trusted to determine the exact needs of his department. Unconsciously he takes the "rush" season as his standard, thus is averse to losing a tried man and fights any reduction of his force so long as he can make a fair showing of activity and output. Pressure must sometimes be brought to bear to convince him that the interests of the company overshadow the smooth running of his department a month hence, before he will consent to the loan of one or more of his workers to another department where the need is of today.

For instance, the superintendent of a huge western plant determined recently, after study of the employment reports, that the number of new men put on was out of proportion to the current increase in business. The authority of the employment man had never been defined and he had had no choice, when a requisition was forwarded to him, but to fill it. Facing the superintendent's decisive order, however, that no more men were to be hired until further orders from the front office, he was thrown back on his office and factory supply

to fill his orders. For boys, particularly, there was a great demand, but every foreman fought transfers of his messengers and helpers.

### *Exchanging Help between Departments to Meet Emergencies*

“Will you let me have any boys who are not working this minute?” he was finally driven to ask, after study of various departments had convinced him that there was a certain amount of loafing among the lads. The foreman consented of course, but when the employment man rounded up two or three in several departments where a dozen boys were on duty, they objected to the transfer. Finally appeal was made to the superintendent. He saw a light, issued a general order giving the employment man jurisdiction over every man under the rank of department head, with authority to transfer, and reiterated his order to hire no more new men.

For three months, the embargo on outside labor was enforced, and though nearly a hundred names were lost to the pay roll in that time, the readjustment of the thousands left had been made to such good purpose that the service to customers has not suffered. Besides the saving of thousands of dollars in wages, the transfers and promotions had actually increased the efficiency of the organization by putting individuals in the places for which they were best fitted.

Occupations the most diverse are sometimes brought together in a single individual. For example, wanting a telegraph operator, I found an entry clerk drawing \$10 a week who had had nine years' experience in charge of a local office and was delighted at the change and the advance I could give him.

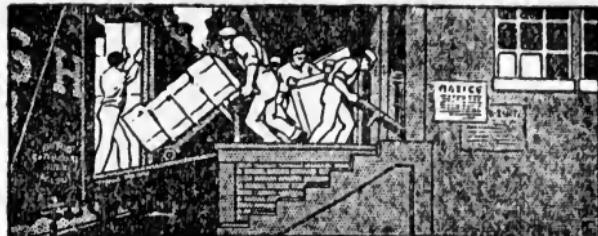
I have found truckers in my occupation file who have had all around experience as country blacksmiths, as machine operators of every kind, as painters and wood workers, and handy men by dozens who were easily drafted into places held by skilled workers before them.

In shifting men in anticipation of a slump of orders in any department, the best method is to take their names from the foreman at the earliest opportunity, get their trades from the application blanks and keep the list on your desk as a sort of emergency market. In placing satisfactory men under such circumstances, I would have no hesitancy in dismissing a mediocre man in another department.

When it is known in a factory that promotion from the ranks will be made whenever possible, ambitious men and boys will begin to fit themselves for better places and will make every effort to keep bright their department records for punctuality, application and satisfactory handling of their work.

“Ginger talks” and suggestion prizes have their places in speeding up a factory or office organization, but when workers understand that they are watched, not so much to insure performance of their tasks, as to get at their capacity for better jobs, there is an immediate and striking advance in individual efficiency and enthusiasm.

The final element in the internal supply is the man laid off because work has slackened in a seasonal industry. Though usually the weakest member of the department, it is well to bear him in mind if there is likely to be need of him within a month or six weeks. Longer than that you are hardly able to command him, since his hunt for work will probably prove successful.



## VII

### NEIGHBORHOOD SOURCES OF SUPPLY

**N**O hard and fast program can be outlined for handling your labor markets, local or foreign. Circumstances surround every industry, the personality and individual convictions of its management color its labor policy, so as to make the problem of supplying office departments and factory workrooms one which every employment man must work out for himself. The utmost of help which can be given him is to suggest the common tools of his trade, the methods by which workers of all classes can be reached and engaged, the things to be kept in mind when searching and hiring acceptable employees. It is for the man who hires to determine which of these methods will be cheapest and most effective when applied to his own factory.

The local supply and your string of applicants do not mean the same thing, save in the case of unskilled labor, either pick-and-shovel men or the beginners in office and factory trades. If your factory has a wide reputation for paying fair wages, providing shop condi-

tions above the average, if there is abundance of sunlight, heat, fresh air in your workrooms and your tools are kept in good condition, many skilled mechanics will be attracted from other cities. Frequently, too, they will be so conscious of their own ability to "make good" at their trades that they will make no effort to sell themselves to you at long range but will "up stakes" and apply in person. Despite this fact, however, the better class of mechanics usually are not found among your daily applicants. These you must seek in other shops or other cities. The very fact that they are employed and in demand wherever they happen to be is sure evidence that they are the kind of men you want. Therefore they are worth going after.

Handling the local market for skilled men—either for office or factory—is a delicate operation in all but the great cities. In general there is a sort of tacit agreement among all the employers of the smaller centers that there will be no hiring of one another's skilled men. Not infrequently this is unfair, both to mechanics and the better organized of the industries. I believe that the local labor market should be fair and open, and that the best men should gravitate to the company where their value is greatest, as shown by the wages paid for their kind of skill. There are many sorts of work for which a high rate cannot be paid—why should a man of unusual skill be employed on such when his intelligence and dexterity can produce greater wealth elsewhere?

Open bidding for the services of such men, of course, might be resented. There are half a dozen ways of reaching them—to which no employer could object.

## WILCOX COMPANY

CHICAGO

PASTE  
PHOTOGRAPH  
OF APPLICANT  
HERE

IN ANSWERING PLEASE REFER TO NO. 13477

June 6th, 1913

Smith and Watson,

Syracuse, N.Y.,

Gentlemen:

Geo. W. Johnson (photo attached)  
has applied to us for a position as Machinist - lathe hand.

On his application he stated that he was in your employ for eight years, doing same class of work, leaving April 20th, 1909, for reason that he wished to come to Chicago.

We require all applicants to furnish responsible references as to their respectability, qualifications for the position named, etc., and shall feel greatly obliged, and treat confidentially, replies to questions below, together with any other information you may give us concerning him.

Very respectfully,

WILCOX CO.

J.H. Hartland.

Is his statement correct?

Is he, to your knowledge, of  
good character and habits?Is his general conduct such as to entitle  
him to the confidence of his employers?Do you consider him competent to  
fill the position he applied for?

REMARKS:

Dated

Signed

FORM 8: This letter brings the exact information required instead of the general and useless "To whom it may concern" type of reply. Pasting a photograph of the applicant on the reference letter lessens the possibility of getting an opinion on the wrong man

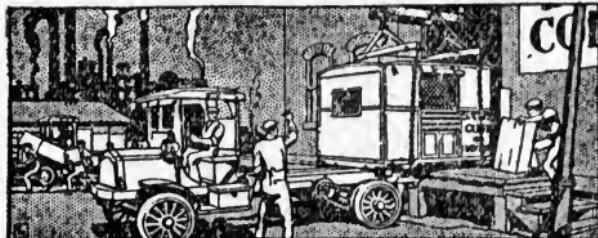
(1) Through men already employed—since skilled men in the same line are likely to know the best workmen in their own lines and the shops in which they work. Usually it is enough to ask them. If they are satisfied with the shop conditions, they will persuade their friends to make application.

(2) Through your foremen, if their judgment and freedom from personal bias can be trusted. They know the foremen in the other shops if they are wide-awake and good mechanics. Not infrequently they will hear of a thoroughly good workman who has been laid off because orders are failing, or is dissatisfied with the conditions under which he is working or living.

(3) Machinery houses usually have lists of mechanics able to handle their lathes, planers, universal milling machines, woodworking machines and so on.

(4) Blind advertising in newspapers, the average manufacturing concern not caring to appear publicly in the market for workmen of any certain type. Unless press of orders or enlargements of equipment supply the reason, public advertising usually creates uneasiness among employees or prompts them to make demands based on the putative necessity of the company to retain their services.

(5) Standing lists of local men available, either those who have made application directly or have announced themselves open to an offer from your concern when you have a place to their liking. In handling such a list, it is well to keep in touch with individuals every thirty days through the medium of a return postal.



## VIII

### GETTING IN TOUCH WITH OUT-OF-TOWN WORKMEN

**A**S the local market has come to be the most important consideration in locating a factory, it is the thing which more than all else determines the policy in hiring men. It is a truism to say that the larger the city, the greater the available or floating supply of workmen of all classes—likewise the greater the chance that your skilled men may be hired away from you. Things have a way of evening themselves up.

This lack of competition, desirable as it is from the employer's viewpoint, has the effect of limiting the market for the better grades of men. The thoughtful mechanic is shy of proposals to move to towns where he will have no choice of employers and no chance of securing another berth if he should lose the one offered him. He may agree that the lowered cost of living makes reduction from the large-city scale of wages perfectly fair, but if you seek him—as is usually the case when your factory is in a town away from the great centers of industry—the guarantees he exacts may wipe

out the advantages of the low wage scale.

New England tool makers and expert mechanics, for example, will not settle in any of the smaller cities west of Pittsburgh except on an agreement to pay their moving bills and to send them back cost free should employment fail within a year or good reason arise for dissatisfaction on their part. To balance the difficulty in securing skilled men, however, the small town offers the unquestioned advantage of a stable supply of intelligent laborers who are handy men and machine operators in the raw.

Since it is the amount of work and number of potential employers, the living conditions—housing facilities, rents, price of necessities, school facilities and local transportation—which establish local market conditions, the more an employment man knows about the general and factory situation where an applicant has been employed, the better bargain he is able to make with him. The man may have been working in a factory unfavorably located or one on which physical conditions or the nature of the product set an artificial value on his ability. The market may have been famine-stricken, due to a temporary demand for men in his trade, or the management may have been incompetent to correlate the elements rightly fixing wages.

The antithesis of this, of course, is the concrete advantages the employment agent is able to marshal for the persuasion of a mechanic who is desirable. When the local market, reinforcing your internal supply, is inadequate to factory or office needs for skilled men, the only recourse is to other industrial centers—selected, of course, with an eye to the largest available number of such men as you want and

the current local demand for their services.

In reaching and working these foreign fields, there are several methods which may be used singly or in conjunction, depending on the urgency and extensiveness of your demands. Here, too, the standing of your company touching working conditions and treatment of men, the stability of employment, the living conditions and school facilities of your town, the general cost of living and the nature of your local labor market are all selling points for the influencing of the workmen you seek, or on the contrary, negative arguments which you must overcome in your handling of them. Following are some ways of getting into communication with them:

(1) A standing list of applicants. If your local supply is never quite adequate, it is well to list every skilled man who writes to you, and keep in constant touch with him by means of a "tickler" file, sending him a return postal card every thirty days—the signing and mailing of which will signify that he is still open to a proposition. For an industry requiring occasional drafts on out-of-town markets, I know no other method at once so cheap and satisfactory. The "tickler" cards can be split up among all the days of the month, the double postal can bear a printed form and the work of addressing and dating can be performed in a few minutes each day.

In making up this standing file of applicants, it is not necessary to do more than satisfy yourself that the man probably is desirable and that he has a good reason for wishing to leave his present employment or to account for being out of work. Looking up his references is a thing to be avoided, both because it involves correspondence which may be

wholly profitless because you can never use the man and because it is an injustice to the applicant to exhaust the patience of his sponsors or former employers.

Acknowledge every letter, however, whether the writer impresses you or not, for the name of the house can easily suffer through a man who has been ignored. At the same time be explicit in your answer, state the situation plainly, and make no statement which can in any way be twisted by the recipient's fancy into a promise of work or you may have him presenting himself before you within a week. File your out-of-town cards by occupations. I have followed skilled men by means of a "tickle" file for more than a year, and in the end hired them at a total cost of less than half a dollar.

(2) "Want ads" in out-of-town newspapers. Choose one or more cities having industries similar to your own, and insert a blind advertisement from three to six times explaining exactly what kind of men you want, the wages paid, the advantages your industry and city offer to skilled workers, the cost of living. Make your announcement attractive; it must have selling quality to appeal to the kind of man you're hunting and stir his interest to the point of writing to your newspaper address. Secure a copy of the paper you intend to use, and make your "ad" different from the prevailing type either by the use of white space or some other method of display.

Use the "want ad" medium or mediums of the town you've selected—the penny paper by preference and an evening sheet. Be careful not to overstate your case or promise permanent employment if you want men for only three or six months. Absolute honesty in this

regard is imperative. Order the newspapers to forward all answers to your "ad" and correspond with the writers directly.

(3) Advertising in trade papers. For high-grade machinists, tool-makers, electricians and engineers, the machinery papers; for blacksmiths, tool-hardeners, molders, and other iron workers, the iron trade papers; for cabinet makers, pattern makers and machine operators, the wood-working journals.

(4) Personal canvass of foreign markets. If you need men in numbers and want them quickly, the most effective method is to take to the road yourself or send a competent foreman to interview and engage workers.

Select your cities as for the "want ad" campaign, and send "want ads" ahead of you for insertion at least twenty-four hours before your arrival in the city so that men in the shops will have time to talk your visit over and so give it wider publicity and perhaps persuade one another that the opening is worth investigation. Tell what you want and name your hotel and the hours during the day and evening when you can be seen.

If you need ten or a dozen tool makers or twice as many workers in other trades, for instance, you may visit three or four towns before you secure just the kind of workers the tasks demand.

(5) Direct advertising and general public advertising in the case of important industries situated away from the great labor markets. It has been found profitable to advertise at tolerably regular intervals in these latter centers, and follow up all applicants by means of a "tickler" file like that described above. Such industries are always in need of superior mechanics and tool makers and for the usual local

supply they are compelled to create a foreign supply just as staple. In the way of direct advertising, they use booklets describing and picturing factory living conditions, giving their wage scale and piece-work rates and other information likely to interest workmen of intelligence. These are distributed in various ways, sometimes by the selling agencies in industrial centers.

(7) Study of labor conditions throughout the country. A slump in some industry employing your kind of men may release scores of good workmen at the very moment when you need them. Threat of a strike, also, frequently drives the best mechanics away from the factory before the trouble really takes form, since they prefer to throw up their places rather than run risks of being connected with a walk-out. As these men scatter, one or more of them may apply to you in person. From him the names of a dozen or twenty other high-grade men may be secured who will welcome the chance to "jump before they are pushed."

(8) Names supplied by workmen from other cities who have "made good." Since every mechanic is a fair type of his associates and friends, the new man who proves his ability can be used by the employment office in the search of skilled men. Usually, if he is satisfied with his working and living conditions and wages, he is only too glad to advertise the fact to friends in his last factory. If you need more men of his stamp, ask him to write to these friends. By judicious coaxing his letters can be made to state conditions exactly as they are, and only the final letter engaging the other man need be written by the employment agent. References, in such cases, are not indispensable—the type of your first workman

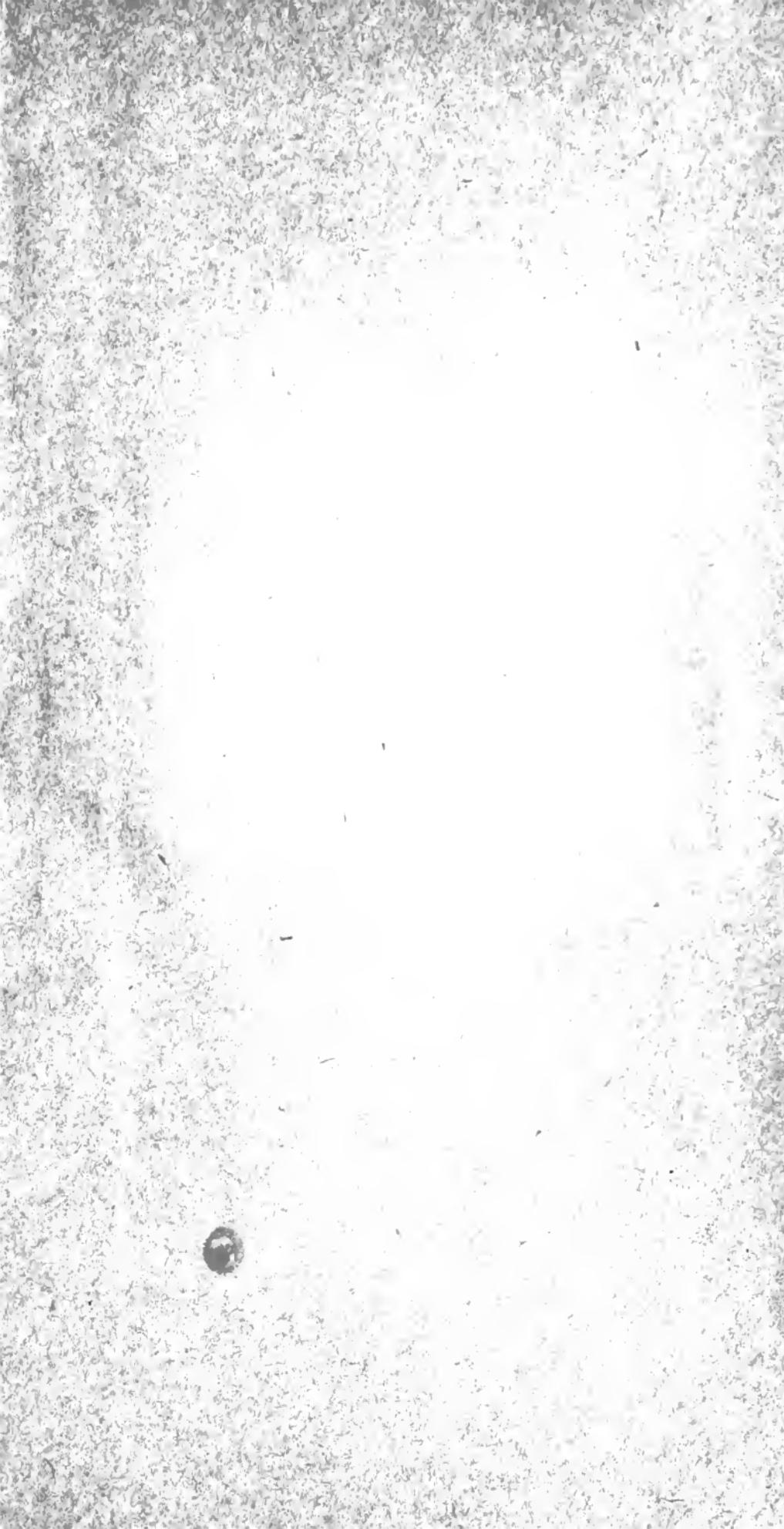
**FORM 9:** The employment manager interviews all men who are leaving, before giving them their pay, and is able in this way to judge the labor conditions in the plant. Thus the services of many valued men are retained even after unfair treatment has discouraged them. If laid off, good men can be entered in a list of live applicants, and notified when there is more work

giving you a reasonable line on his mates.

This method sometimes works a hardship on the factory from which you draw the men; especially if your shop conditions be superior and your rates higher. But here again the company to which the individual worker is of the greatest value ought to be able to command his services.

(9) Correspondence with the superintendents or employment agents of out-of-town factories. Conditions in differing industries are frequently so wide apart that one factory will have a reserved list too large to be comfortable while another is experiencing a famine. Desire to help the men it can't use and to accommodate a company which may return the favor at another time will usually prompt the former to good nature, whether or not there have been previous business relations between the houses.

(10) Employment agencies of proved worth. In nearly all the largest cities there are agencies that confine their activities to limited fields like the supplying of mechanics and technical experts or office specialists of various types. The average employment agency which lists every class of labor is of little use in the securing of good men. The value of the other depends entirely on the character and knowledge of the man who conducts it. If you have tried him and found him trustworthy you will certainly receive no other service so cheap and satisfactory.



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